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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

4 November 1985

SPOT COMMENTARY: USSR Coverage of President Reagan's Interview

The Izvestiya version of President Reagan's interview with Soviet journalists is heavily edited, particularly the portion in which he responded verbally to their questions. Key omissions included:

- The President's defense of research on defensive weapons and his offer to share the technological results of that research;
- The President's reference to Warsaw Pact numerical superiority over NATO;
- The President's defense of the US troop presence in Korea as the result of a UN-sponsored action, and his reference to the UN condemnation of North Korea;
- The President's statement that Warsaw Pact countries are occupied by foreign troops in violation of the Yalta agreement;
- The President's condemnation of Soviet efforts to install an acceptable government in Afghanistan, along with your reference to Soviet troops having been there for six years;
- An exchange over the number of warheads in the US and Soviet nuclear;
- Arsenals, including the President's statement that the USSR had added 7,000 warheads since Salt I. [REDACTED]

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In addition to editing the President's text, the Soviets accompanied it with a lengthy commentary by the interviewing journalists intended to provide the correct Party line on how it should be interpreted. The evening newscast Vremya devoted two

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minutes to the interview, half of which consisted of the 'impressions' of the interviewing journalists. Vremya also preceded the report with a commentary presenting the principal tenets on security issues in the recently approved Party program.

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The commentary acknowledges President's comments on US peaceful intentions toward the USSR and the need to 'normalize' relations, but criticizes him for allegedly giving a 'distorted' view of Soviet foreign policy that blames the USSR for regional problems in Nicaragua, South Africa, and the Middle East. The commentary claims that the President's remarks offer 'nothing new' and that the 'entire rationale' for the interview is to counter the positive impact that recent Soviet moves in arms control have had on US and world public opinion. The commentary accuses the President of being prepared to forget or not notice 'obvious facts' if they fail to conform to his own views, or if they 'expose the imperialist nature of his activities.'

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The heavy editing of the President's remarks and the decision to publish them only in conjunction with lengthy expositions of the Party line clearly reflect concern over how to manage the unaccustomed appearance in Soviet media of remarks critical of some Soviet policies. The one-day delay in publishing the interview may have been intended to afford the propaganda apparatus more time to prepare, and may also have reflected hope that the President's interview would attract a somewhat smaller audience if it appeared on a workday than if it appeared on a weekend.

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